

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of God.—James Freeman Clarke.

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THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI

"Christmas-time would be far poorer without the Wise Men and their star," says John Erskine. "They are the romance of the story. How romantic to see the kings with their gifts—wise kings at that—kneeling before the manger, with the sleepy cattle looking on. They came from the East, that mysterious region from which life and wisdom, in the old stories, always emerge. What were they wise about? At first blush, we might say the story doesn't specify their wisdom. They followed a star, the kind of light which makes us think of spiritual things. And what an end to their search for truth—to find this forlorn family in a stable! We should like to know what they thought, and just why they gave their handsome gifts, and what they said when they got home. But their departure is as inscrutable as their coming."

Now here is the reason why the Magi gave their particular gifts.

In that mysterious East from which the Magi came, are always coming, there are three countries which are to be found on no map.

The first country is a bleak land, with scarcely any beauty for the eye to rest upon. The ground is rocky, the skies are gray, and chill winds blow. But in this country man's will wrestles with nature, extracts precious things from the earth, draws forth mighty powers, puts these powers in harness for driving the chariots of material necessity. It is a land of incessant enterprise; and there men are seen in busy action, making and re-making, getting and spending. From this country came the First Wise Man. And he brought *Gold*.

The second country is a land of magnifi-

cent distances. There are fertile fields in the plains; but on the horizon stand great, blue mountains with snowy peaks where no man has ever set foot. And in this land are many white temples where men worship Truth. They seek increase of knowledge; find strength in ideas; dig the foundations of new thought; take flights of daring imagination. And the brightness of intellect is over the land. From this country came the Second Wise Man. And he brought *Frankincense*.

The third country is a land of luxuriant sunlight and radiant color. Blossoming trees are there all the year round, and many unfading flowers. On pleasant hillsides, by quiet streams, are seen populous clusters of homes. Everywhere in this land men walk in friendship, meet in love, put forth their trust toward one another. And when night falls, there are to be heard little, wandering, wistful songs. From this country came the Third Wise Man. And he brought liquid *Myrrh*.

So these three together, being as wise as they were, each perhaps as wise as the other, followed the star and were responsive to the sign of all times and were aware of some eternal value in the midst of the world of life. And coming to the place where there was the straw of the soil and the sleepy animals and the manger which human hands had made, they found the Strange Being in whom all hopes and fears perpetually meet—the maker of all history, the promise of the future, the heir of all things, the supreme possession—the Child. And to him they offered each the substance of a country—the country of the busy will, and the country of the aspiring intellect, and the country of the robust affections. To him who is the Lord of Equity, they gave the *Gold*—the sign of

Labor; to him who is the Lord of Truth, they gave the Frankincense—the sign of Thought; to him who is the Lord of Love, they gave the gift of Myrrh—the symbol of all Affection. Thus was the threefold Realm of Man offered to the Lord of All; and body, mind, and heart were given to the service of the godlike Life.

This meaning of the wondrous story points partly to what we gladly recognize as being already in the world, and partly to the promise of what shall be. With less of poetry, but no less of vision, how do we show forth the secrets of the Magi? How do we open our treasures and devote them to the Lord of Life?

There is the Gift of Gold. It is all man's striving for material possessions and the spirit in which we use them. It is all the world of labor and industry and commerce, of invention and acquisition and use. One unselfish day in the year—at Christmas—will not bring that gift where it belongs. No magical change or charity of Scrooge will bring it. See the many faces marked by pre-occupation with the problem of scanty means; see those who know the price of things and not their value; see those to whom success is a golden padlock. Then consider the Wise Man and the Gift of Gold to a priceless Life. If we are followers of the star, if we are interpreters of this world's high purpose, we shall swing toward a truer valuation of things than has dictated the scrambles of the past. It is a perverted order of values which outrages human life. The Child matters most. How much will you take for the infant John or Winifred in your home? Reckon in millions, and then laugh! But how much for any child?—in Chicago, or Vienna, or China? How much do you care that the commerce of the world shall work, as it may, for peace and welfare, and not for rapacity and the detriment of human lives? There is a new and divine equity growing in our midst. To this equity, if we are wise, we shall give our hands.

And there is the Gift of Frankincense. It is the emblem of man's quest for knowledge and beauty. It signifies the human heritage of learning and art, and all the lovely promise of man's power of thought and understanding. See the subway news stand. Oh, the frankincense! But you who read *The Boston Transcript* and the best books, new and old—how much has your mind grown since you left school and college? Judge by its power to set aside a prejudice when a truth con-

fronts you. How often do you say, "It was my opinion; but I see I must change it"? Is not that to be intellectually alive to divine possibilities in our midst? Is it not for lack of fearless intelligence that the world is in constant peril, and democracy is still a hazardous experiment? What a splendid figure of the proper office of education is this offering of the frankincense to the Child! That is what every real teacher is doing. Let the teachers magnify their calling. They are numbered with the Magi, who bring knowledge to the Holy Child. And there is a new and divine truth growing in our midst. To this truth, if we are wise, we shall give our minds.

And there is the Gift of Myrrh. It is the token of our service of love. It signifies every healing charity, every uncalculating generosity, every endearing relationship. The very gladness of the heart of love is in the gift of myrrh. Remember O. Henry's story of the two poor, dear young people at Christmas, who "unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house." And "He" stole out and sold his precious watch to buy "Her" a fine comb for her hair, while at the same hour "She" sold her hair to buy "Him" a coveted fob for his watch! But when this folly of the self-giving ones runs short, all our charities become busybodies and our most benevolent schemes begin to creak. All our good errands lose their way at last, unless they carry with them the Love which can see God and the Neighbor in one person. The star will hover over any cradle, will stop over any place, will stand over a man's own house, if there is someone bringing the gift of myrrh. And every day there is a new and divine love born in our midst. To this love, if we are very wise, we shall give our hearts.

—Vivian T. Pomeroy.

IT TAKES SO LITTLE

It takes so little to make us sad,
Just a slighting word or a doubting sneer,
Just a scornful smile on some lips held dear,
And our footsteps lag, though the goal seem
near,
And we lose the courage and hope we had—
So little it takes to make us sad.

It takes so little to make us glad,
Just the cheering clasp of a friendly hand,
Just a word from one who can understand;
And we finish the task we long had planned,
And we lose the doubt and the fear we had—
So little it takes to make us glad.

—Ida Goldsmith Morris

WITH OUR HOME-KEEPERS

Favorite Recipes

Nourishing Luncheon

Now that the kiddies have started off to school, the old problem of a nourishing luncheon arises. Milk, fresh vegetables and fruits, those vitamin-bearing food necessities, must play their valuable part in the scheme of things.

The vegetables should be freshly cooked for the little ones. Cook enough for dinner if you wish and reheat them for the older folks in the evening, but give the younger children freshly cooked vegetables. Meats, it will do no harm to serve twice cooked.

Invest in some small ramekins. You will find that an individual dish of creamed potatoes, finished in the oven, with a sprinkle of buttered bread crumbs, will be of much more interest to the child with a finicky appetite than just ordinary creamed potatoes served from the family dish on an ordinary plate.

Scalloped dishes of various types may be served in these small dishes. Tomatoes, for instance. There is nothing finer for the small or large members of the family.

Chicken Cutlets

Parboil a medium-sized hen, cool, cut meat in cubes as for salad. Prepare a white sauce by melting two tablespoons butter, stirring in two tablespoons of flour until smooth, then adding two cups of milk gradually while stirring constantly until a smooth, thickened sauce is formed. Season to taste with salt and white pepper. Remove from fire and add yolks of two eggs. Stir in and return to the fire for a minute until the eggs are cooked. Add the cubed chicken and pour on to a platter to chill. When ready to serve, mould into cylinders, dip in beaten eggs, then into fine bread crumbs, and fry in hot deep fat until a golden brown.

Corn and Tomato Chowder

One-quarter pound salt pork, 1 onion finely chopped, 1 green pepper shredded, 2 cups boiling water, 1 cup tomatoes, 3 potatoes sliced, 2 teaspoons salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper, 1 cup corn, 3 cups hot milk, 1 tablespoon butter, 2 tablespoons flour, 2 common crackers.

Cut salt pork into small cubes and fry until brown. Add onion and pepper and

cook slowly for 10 minutes. Add water, tomatoes, potatoes, salt and pepper, and cook until potatoes are tender; add corn and 2 cups milk and thicken with butter and flour blended together. Add crackers, soaked in 1 cup milk, and heat slowly for five minutes.

Handy Hints

Linen will wear longer and more evenly if it is used uniformly. Put clean linen at the bottom of the pile, and use from the top; in this way each thing is used in turn.

In preparation for baking a pie crust shell (which is to be baked before filling) prick repeatedly with a sharp pointed fork. This keeps the crust from humping.

If you are short of time to make your bread or rolls use an extra quantity of yeast. The dough will rise quickly and have a good taste. Use one cake for each cup of liquid and your bread will be up in three hours if the dough is kept warm.

In cooking for an invalid who likes ice cream it is useful to know that a small amount freezes quickly in a baking powder can packed in salt and ice in the proper proportions. The danger of salty water leaking in can be avoided by covering the seam between cover and can smoothly with a strip of cloth thoroughly oiled with lard or other fat.

To keep silver salt shaker tops from becoming corroded, cover the inside of each with paraffin. While it is cooling, prick holes in the paraffin with a large needle.

When individual jellies are to be prepared for a large number, such as a church supper, pour the jelly, slightly cooled, into paper cups which have previously been dampened with cold water. To remove, dip quickly into hot water and prick holes in the bottom of the cup and invert. They make very pretty moulds and save a deal of dish washing.

THE COMFORTER

The Prayer:

Hold Thou my hand,
The night is dark, the storm so wild!

The Answer:

I will not leave thee comfortless,
My child! My child!

—Rev. William Wood.

"The Child is father of the Man."

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. J. A. McCaddin, 21 Ashfield St., Roslindale, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. McCaddin, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

Those who enjoy receiving books and magazines are asked to remember that they, in their turn, can give much pleasure if they will take pains to write to the persons who send such reading matter. In cases where no word of response goes back—not even to say that the books or magazines were received—senders may suppose the parcels were not welcome. Let us each do our share.

APPEALS

1. Miss Ethel Hodges, Copeland, Ark., writes that she is laid up with a sore leg. She gets very lonesome and would like some scraps for quilting and old silk stockings or pieces of silk to make rugs. She thanks her friends for past remembrances.

2. I would enjoy some reading or sewing material. My girl is six years old and would like to be remembered at Christmas time. Mrs. Austin Cogburn, Leo, Cooke Co., Texas.

3. I have moved to a strange town in Kentucky and don't know many people. My husband has been ill for two years and I have four children. I would like bits of thread and some books,—“The Trail of the Lonesome Pine” and some Bible stories for the children, or any kind of good reading. Since moving I have lost trace of my Cheerful Letter friends, but hope to hear again soon. Mrs. Daisy Sneed, 529 Martin St., Harlan, Ky.

4. Mrs. Effie Anderson, R. 1, B. 35, Dru-
more, Pa., sends her thanks to all the good friends who remembered her, and especially to a Miss Standish. She asks for a bedspread design, embroidery thread and good reading. Bad health has kept Mrs. Ander-

son in since last Spring, and she would be so grateful for a little cheer.

5. Is there anyone who could send me a good Bible, quilt pieces, or something to make into rugs? asks Miss Leona Brown, Bowie, Texas. Her mother is very old and her sister, who is sixty years old, has dropsy. Please answer soon, is her request.

6. I would love to correspond with someone in the East. Some reading matter would be nice, too. Mrs. Mamie Richardson, Rugby, Va.

7. I am nineteen years old and have a baby boy only two months old. I live in a very lonesome place, seldom see anyone, and it would be good to receive some letters from people in other states. My husband is a farmer, but we have suffered from two droughts here, which leaves us in a bad condition. We are not able to take magazines or papers, so I would enjoy some, and any sewing material. Mrs. Omer Bryant, Scotland, Ark.

8. Mrs. Lelah Mabe, Lawsonville, N. C., is the mother of four boys, 8, 6 and 3 years, and 2 weeks. Owing to the dry summer the crops have been very unsuccessful and she is afraid she will not be able to make the children very happy at Christmas time. The

two oldest boys go to school and they like pencils and papers; and the younger ones would like toys, or just anything to make the holidays a little brighter. Some light reading matter would please the mother.

9. I haven't heard from the *Cheerful Letter* ladies for a long time. I get so lonesome, living so far back, and I would appreciate some woolen and cotton scraps for quilts and silk material for cushions. Also the children would like to be remembered at Christmas. I hope some of the ladies will write me, and I thank you for past kindnesses. Mrs. Bertha Williams, Archey, Van Buren Co., Ark.

10. My dear, kind friends, I want to thank you for all the cheer you have sent in the past and hope you will remember me again with quilt pieces and thread. We live ten miles from town and get very lonely in the winter and it would be nice if some folks remembered the children at Christmas time with toys and tree trimmings. May God bless you all, is my prayer. Mrs. Baxter Neaves, Jefferson, N. C.

11. Mrs. Elizabeth Tester, Archey, Ark., would enjoy some reading matter.

12. I hope my *Cheerful Letter* friends have not forgotten me. Our home and all we had has just been destroyed and we trust our friends will remember us at Christmas time. Wayne is 8 years old and a shut-in, and he likes cards, pictures, books, etc. Ruby, an orphan girl, age 11, would like reading. Perhaps some friends will cheer us during the long winter days that are ahead. Mrs. Betty Harrison, Evensville, Tenn.

13. I am a poor mother with ten children, ages 8 months to 20 years. Won't some *Cheerful Letter* friends send us some sewing material or reading matter? We are a large family and cheer of any kind will be appreciated. Mrs. Maggie Richardson, Brandon, N. C.

14. Mrs. J. A. Treadaway, 337 Sykes Ave., North, Wadesboro, N. C., says she has just seen a copy of the *Cheerful Letter* magazine and would like to correspond with someone. She is 40 years old.

15. I have been sick most of the summer and just back from the hospital, and am not able to do much. I would like some reading and some quilt scraps. I get so lonesome when my husband and boys are in the fields at work. Thank you for past favors. Mrs. Jesse Carpenter, R. 1, Peachland, N. C.

16. Mrs. Jane M. Blackburn, Chesterhill,

Ohio (formerly Gloucester, Ohio), was introduced to the *Cheerful Letter* people in 1896. She writes that words can never express her gratitude for the cheer that her friends have sent her. Her husband met with a fatal accident and left her to provide for three little ones. Many years have gone by and her children are married and now she has three lovely grandchildren. Mrs. Blackburn lives alone and would like to hear from some of her old correspondents and perhaps some new ones. She would be thankful for some silk scraps or wool for patchwork and wonders if someone could send her the *American Magazine* when they have finished with it.

17. I wish to thank all those of you who have sent me cheer. I certainly do appreciate it and I hope someone will correspond with me this winter. My husband has been ill and can only work a little at a time. I have two boys, ages 8 and 15, and two girls, ages 5 and 12, and games and light reading will cheer them. My oldest daughter likes to piece quilts. She pieced a quilt when she was 7 years old. Mrs. A. L. Lewis, R. 1, B. 8, Big Spring, Tenn.

18. My husband is still unable to work and I hope the good *Cheerful Letter* people will not forget us at Christmas time. My boys are 20, 16, 14, 12 and 7 years, and 9 months. The girls are 9, 5 and 3. We like reading very much and I would enjoy a correspondent. Mrs. Maud Wright, R. F. D. 1, Peachland, N. C.

19. Will you dear ones please remember me this sad and lonesome winter. My heart still aches over the loss of my dear son last Christmas and the holiday season will be sad, and I write for comfort and cheer. My three girls, ages 9, 13 and 16, will be glad of good reading or anything that could be used in the 3rd or 7th grades of school. I would like the books, "Falsely Accused" and "When Dark Clouds Gather Around" by Gertrude Flemming. Quilt pieces and bits of thread would help pass the many lonely hours. And please don't forget my little grand-daughter. She will be 3 years old on December 5th and no daddy this year. A baby doll would be lovely. I guess we won't see Santa Claus this year unless our good friends think of us. Mrs. Emma Blankenship, R. 6, B. 107B, Roanoke, Va.

20. It has been a long while since I have had a letter printed in the *Cheerful Letter*. I have been a sufferer for 16 years. My children have grown up, one by one married,

until I was left a lonely old woman. Last April my son's wife died and left a dear little baby girl of 3 weeks. I sometimes wonder if God didn't look down upon me and saw how lonely and sad I was, and sent the dear little one to comfort me. I will need a little help and hope to be remembered during the coming winter and particularly at Christmas time. I like to sew and embroider and can use some scraps and patterns or yarn. Has any friend any of Gene Stratton Porter's books? And Bible stories for my little grandchildren? We have just passed through the hottest and driest summer here among the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I will never be able to explain in words what the *Cheerful Letter* friends have been to me. Mrs. Beulah Moore, R. 1, Lawsonville, N. C.

21. Mrs. H. C. Nelson, Stoneville, N. C., would like to receive pieces for quilts and reading material. Especially something for her child, Carmen, 13 years old, who is crippled and would like something to cheer her and make her forget her condition. Anything would be appreciated.

22. I hope my friends haven't forgotten me. I am hoping I will be remembered again with quilt scraps, books and magazines for the children, because they cannot go to school, we live so far away. I have been sick with rheumatism and cannot walk or do any work. My boys are 3, 5 and 10 years old, the girls are 7, 12 and 14. Please don't forget us during the long winter months. Mrs. W. M. Dotson, R. 1, Dayton, Tenn.

23. Here I come again asking for cheer and I wish to thank all who sent me reading matter last year, and especially the lady who sent *Current Events*. I am a little lad, aged 12. My daddy is an invalid and I cannot attend school regularly because the distance is three miles and the walk is through mud and very cold. Will someone send me some good reading. My brother and I like Indian stories best. We are in the mountains far away from everything and we hope you don't forget our family at Christmas. Elgin Roberson, Elamsville, Va.

24. Mrs. Cutler Hill, Lawsonville, N. C., thinks it has been a long time since she has heard from her *Cheerful Letter* friends and she would like to be remembered with quilt scraps, sewing material and yarn. Her children are all married and she gets very lonely. Remembrances for her grandchildren will be appreciated at Christmas time. It has been such a dry year she feels the

parents cannot play Santa Claus this Christmas. All her seeds have dried and perhaps some friend will send some more bulbs.

25. I wish to thank all who have sent me magazines and reading material, also the kind friend who sent the lovely quilt pieces. She forgot to send her name. I am trying to knit some squares of yarn to make an afghan. I would appreciate some yarn to make the blocks. Mrs. Minnie J. Davis, R. M. 1, Maysville, Ky.

26. I live with my three children,—one boy, age 16, and two girls, ages 12 and 7. I get very lonely while they are in school, and will be so happy to receive sewing and reading. I would love to hear from my friend, Mrs. F. B. Phipps, of Boston, Mass. I miss her cheer so much. Mrs. W. R. Ashley, Amy, N. C.

27. Mrs. Mary G. Hall, Sandy Ridge, N. C., lost her little girl three years old last Christmas. Her baby, 18 months old, has been very ill with pneumonia. She has another little girl, seven years old, in school. She would like some books and cards for the little girl, and toys for the baby to keep him amused while she is sewing and doing housework; also a few quilt scraps and magazines for herself.

28. The young daughter of Mrs. Attie Clark, R. F. D., R. 2, Bassetts, Va., writes that her mother has been ill for several months. She would like quilt scraps as she can help quite a bit. There are four other children, 10, 8, 6 and 2 years of age. She asks for something to amuse them.

29. Mrs. J. A. Campbell, R. 2, Box 7, Crumpler, N. C., has no postage to thank each of her friends. She does so now. She writes that her three little girls hope to be remembered at Christmas.

30. I would be glad to receive any kind of good books or magazines for my family. My husband and three boys are away working out money to pay for our home. I have three girls at home. My husband is a local preacher. Mrs. R. G. Weaver, Sturgills, N. C.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mrs. Jane M. Blackburn, formerly of Gloucester, Ohio, now of Chester, Ohio.

Geology cannot reform the drunkard nor can chemistry purify the thief.—*Rev. Edgar Tilton, D.D.*

GOOD HEALTH NOTES

His Work Goes Marching on

October 3rd marked the 76th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest men who ever lived, the man who saved more lives than perhaps any other man in history, the man who looked after the physical welfare of our soldiers during the World War—William Crawford Gorgas.

Gorgas has gone down in history as "physician to the world." It was his genius that made possible the building of the Panama Canal, for it was he who took the Walter Reed theory of the transmission of yellow fever and gave it practical application there, thus saving the countless lives that otherwise would have perished during the undertaking because Panama was then a pest hole of yellow fever and malaria.

As surgeon general of the United States Army during the World War, General Gorgas was charged with the duty, not only of building up a medical corps that was the greatest ever assembled under one man, but of selecting healthy men as soldiers and then keeping them well in spite of hardship. In this he succeeded so well that the boys were, as a whole, healthier in the Army than they had been in civilian life, and were protected from many illnesses to which their civilian brothers were falling heir.

The draft and these examinations made by Gorgas revealed an almost terrifying state of the Nation's health. To provide an army with 4,000,000 physically-fit men it became necessary to examine about 7,000,000. The result of such selection was the finest army, physically, mentally and morally that the world has ever known.

The examinations were made of what was thought to be the flower of American manhood, and yet one-third of all of us, and more than that, must be afflicted with physical ailments of which similarly we were unaware.

Many of the defects revealed by the examinations were, however, correctible. To many of those rejected, the examinations had been a blessing, for it advised them of physical impairments of which they would otherwise have been unaware, and gave them an opportunity to correct them before they had advanced to the stage where the damage could not longer be repaired.

Gorgas' experience with the medical examination has been a tremendous object lesson to doctors and laymen. It used to be that the doctor was interested in a person

only when he was flat on his back in bed. Now the folly of waiting until the fire is raging destructively through the body house before anything is done about it has dawned on the medical men and laity alike.

One day, when the millions of young men were filing into Army headquarters in different parts of the country for their medical examinations, Gorgas said, "What an example this would be, after this war, if we could get not just boys of military age, but everybody in the United States to have periodic health examinations every year; what a wonderful thing that would be for the prevention of disease."

The Gorgas Memorial Institute, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., is actively engaged in carrying out this very hope of Gorgas. For years it has preached the value of the periodic health examination from the platform, through the press, through most successful health essay contests in high schools and through the medium of radio. In the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory in Panama scientific experiments and research in the causes and prevention of disease are being carried on by experts, and in this country a Department of Mosquito Control aids communities in becoming mosquito-free. Thus by a two-way method—health education and research—is the Gorgas Memorial perpetuating the life and work of a hero of health—William Crawford Gorgas.

—Franklin Martin, M.D., Chairman
of the Board, Gorgas Memorial
Institute, in *Boston Globe*.

THE HONKERS

When all the woods are red and gold,
And corn is shocked and dry,
I hear the wild geese overhead
Go speeding down the sky.
Their mighty pinions cleave the air,
To southern marshes bound,
And through the gray and drifting clouds
Their ringing trumpets sound,
Honk, honk!

Between the meadows bare and brown,
And waiting for the snow,
The autoist is speeding fast
His scarlet car below,
And like an echo loud and far
Across the frosty morn,
I hear upon the whistling wind
His wild and warning horn—
Honk, honk!

—Minna Irving.

THE MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS EVE

There they sat in a long, uneven row on the little table near the window, through which the clear, white moonlight streamed. Shining bits of tinsel trim, deep green sprays of pine and holly tucked beneath the silver cord or ribbon bow that held them in place, the rich red of poinsettias gleaming against snow white paper or resting in more splendid fashion on the colorful wrappings of more pretentious packages.

The house was quiet now after a feverish day of preparation for the morrow. In the living-room downstairs stood a tree, gorgeously decked with ornaments of every hue, covered with shining icicles and powdery snow that would not melt, its branches hung with all sorts of strange and lovely fruit, and parcels of many sizes and fantastic shapes heaped about its base.

All was still, save for a gentle little breeze which stole softly through the open window and played among the gifts that waited for the coming of the dawn. For them they, too, would join the greater array of packages beneath the tree or be hidden in its green arms.

And now, as the soft wind stole in and out among them, they roused from their dreaming, and a little murmur arose through the evening air. They began to speak quietly one with another.

"You should see what I am carrying in my heart," said a round box, tied with silver ribbons, sitting quite solidly in its place.

"You are only a box of candy," scoffed its gorgeous crimson neighbor, with a toss of the petals of her gay poinsettia.

"That may be," came the gentle answer, "but I was bought with pennies saved by a little boy who wanted to buy his own gift for his mother, and I carry lots of love in my heart."

"I cost many dollars," came the scornful answer. "I am a vase of solid silver, which a rich young man is giving to his wife. She has everything she can desire, and she is weary of it all. But she would be angry if he did not give her an expensive gift at Christmas. She saw me in the shop one day and admired me. That night she spoke of me to him. So yesterday he bought me, had me wrapped in gold and crimson, and tomorrow I shall go to her. But no real love goes with me."

A voice beside her spoke shyly. "I am

only a tiny white box, but I carry a shining ring to a girl who is dearly loved. He who gives it to her is not rich and he is carrying many burdens, but they hope some day to have a little home together. She will love this ring, not for its value but because it comes from him and is the fruit of much sacrifice."

The little breeze crept under the edges of the wrappings of a square package which stood somewhat apart from the rest. The paper was not quite fresh, with tiny creases here and there. A plain red cord was tied loosely about it and fastened with an awkward little knot and bow. "You would never guess what I am holding," it whispered. "An old lady, whose eyes are dim, whose hands are crippled, and whose pocket-book is empty, has made some holders for her grand-daughter who is soon to be married. She will probably never use them in her new and modern home, for the colors are dull and the stitches are long and uneven, but I hope she will prize them because of the love that went into the making of them."

So, one by one, the packages told their stories. Some were proud and some were humble, some were gay and others were a bit sad, some scoffed at love and its gifts, some greatly prized it.

At last one of the smaller ones found courage to say, "I wonder who will hear the angels' song tonight!" A little laugh went around.

"What are you talking about?" asked the crimson beauty, adding scornfully. "No one believes in angels now!"

But the quiet voice said steadily, "Don't you know? I have heard it said that every Christmas Eve the angels come again to sing the song they sang to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem when Jesus was born. But only a few can hear it, for they must be pure in heart, humble in spirit, and worship Him in love."

There was silence in the room. The peace of the quiet night rested on all the little packages.

"Listen," came a low whisper, "don't you hear them singing?"

The moon had dropped nearly to the horizon and the stars gleamed like golden lamps hung against the sky.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men."

From the bright portals of the stars the music came, but not all those who listened caught the strains.

A sigh went up from some of the little packages, a wistful sigh for something of beauty and joy that they had missed.

Then in the distance churchbells softly chimed. It was midnight and the beginning of Christmas Day. Out on the still air the sweet message rang:

"O little town of Bethlehem,

How still we see thee lie;

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep

The silent stars go by:

Yet in thy dark streets shineth

The everlasting Light;

The hopes and fears of all the years

Are met in thee tonight.

"O holy Child of Bethlehem,

Descend on us, we pray;

Cast out our sin, and enter in,

Be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels

The great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us,

Our Lord Emmanuel."

(Contributed)

GIFTS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS ACROSS THE SEA

4. Russia

Russia was a late-comer in the field of cultural co-operation with the advanced nations of the world. It was not until the nineteenth century that her literature, art and science became known outside of her boundaries and she began to be looked upon as an important factor in human progress.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that throughout the first nine centuries of her history Russia remained a barbarous and uncivilized country. Architecture (of which the Moscow Kremlin is perhaps the most imposing monument), religious painting, historical writing, religious literature—all these may be counted as creditable achievements. But because this civilization was one-sidedly religious and permeated with a spirit of exclusive nationalism, it could not acquire a universal importance, it kept Russia apart from the Western world.

As late as the seventeenth century there were no lay schools in Russia and no universities, no Russian science to speak of, neither secular art nor secular literature. Printed books were scarce and individual authors were still an exception.

The situation changed radically with the beginning of the eighteenth century when the genius of Peter the Great put Russia on the map as a European power, and opened the way to Western influences. The whole eighteenth century may be viewed as a period of apprenticeship and preparation. The century saw foundations solidly laid for secular education; it saw the rise of an educated class; a literary language was created; and the beginning of Russian journalism and book-publishing took place.

And then, in the first half of the nineteenth century, after all this preparatory work had been completed, Russia's national culture rapidly unfolded with extraordinary brilliancy and vigor. It was as if the very soul of the nation, for centuries deprived of proper means of expression, now finally became articulate and was eagerly striving to express itself with a maximum of completeness and power.

It was in the fields of literature and art, not in science or in philosophy, that Russia made her first indisputable contributions to the world's civilization. The influence of the Russian novel on modern European and American literature is too well known a fact to require an elaborate presentation. Turgenyev was the first Russian writer who became widely known outside Russia. Then Tolstoy took the world by storm, and finally his great contemporary, Dostoevsky, began to be read and appreciated. There was a new approach to the everlasting problems of life, a penetrating insight into the deepest movements of the human soul, and a broad sympathy with human needs and sufferings.

Music, another universal language, was the other field in which Russia soon obtained one of the most important places. The triumphant progress of Russian music throughout the world is a well-known fact in the history of modern civilization. And again, as in the case of Russian novelists, the great Russian composers opened to the audiences in foreign countries a new world of feelings and sensations. Deeply national, because intimately connected with the folk-songs of the Russian people, so different and yet so universal, Russian music had no difficulty in becoming a common treasure of mankind.

If we add to literature and music the achievements of the Russian theatre and the ballet, we shall have a more or less complete idea of the deep and wide influence of Russia upon the artistic side of modern

civilization.

By the very nature of her geographical situation Russia is destined to become a bridge between East and West. Geographically Russia is no less an Asiatic than a European country. Within her boundaries live many Oriental peoples with whom she has been in contact for centuries. Russia taught the Orientals many a useful lesson and, in turn, learned from them some valuable things. If the growth of international good will and understanding is one of the most cherished hopes of humanity, then this position of Russia between the two civilizations cannot fail to become of primary importance to the world.—(*Historical Review, Contributions to Civilization, Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary.*)

The radio will save family life from disruption by the automobile.—*Walter Damsch.*

If the Reds can do what they boast in America then there is something wrong with our system.—*Charles E. Sorenson.*

LOST MEMORY, YET COMPILED HIS MEMOIRS

A unique case is that of Professor Giulio Canella, who lost his memory and who has now written five volumes of his memoirs. He was professor of physical science in the University of Padua, and when the war broke out he was called out and served as complement officer in the Trantino, where he was well known by the other officers, and afterwards formed a part of the Italian expeditionary forces in the Near East. During a skirmish in Macedonia he disappeared and was not heard of again.

What had become of him is not known, but three years ago he was found in rags and starving in the streets of Turin and unable to remember his identity. He was sent to an asylum at Collegno and the papers devoted columns to his case when he was eventually discovered by his wife, who came and fetched him and took him back to her home and two children in Verona.

He is not your husband at all, came forward to say a woman named Bruneri, whose husband, Mario Bruneri, was a rake, a thief and had abandoned her and was, moreover, sought by the police. Three different courts in Turin decided that he was Bruneri and for a while he was even taken back to the asylum. But his wife once more obtained possession of him and took him

back to Verona, where he was recognized by numerous friends as the former professor Giulio Canella, by many of the officers who had been with him at the front in Italy and in Macedonia, and by a millionaire uncle in Brazil.

For all that, a fourth judicial tribunal in Turin once more decided he was Bruneri and issued a sentence of seven-seven pages, against which he and his wife appealed, and brought it before the Supreme Court in Rome, which quashed all the previous sentences and ordered a fifth trial of the case before the Appeal Court of Florence. The case naturally has excited enormous interest in Italy.

The Florence court, which was to hear the case this month, has put it off until October. People have become more excited than ever. It is not a story of Wells. It is a true romance of life. I have gone to see the strange professor, who for ten years did not know his identity. I found his hair growing gray and his eyes dim.

—*Boston Transcript.*

A SHOPPING BAG FOR YOUR DOLL

You can make a fine shopping bag for your doll from an old felt hat, or other very heavy woolen material. By looking through your drawing book or some old magazines you will be likely to find a basket that will furnish you with a pattern. Trace the outlines through a piece of thin paper and paste this on cardboard. Cut out around your lines and you will have the pattern for your shopping bag in a pretty basket shape.

Lay this pattern on the felt and cut out two pieces exactly alike, one for the back and another for the front of the bag. If your felt is dark in color, put some stitches of gay silk floss or yarn on the one piece to brighten it up a bit and make it more attractive. Fasten the two pieces of your felt together by sewing over and over around the edges with bright cord or yarn. Do not sew around the top or around the handle of the basket-shaped shopping bag. This is to be left open for dolly's packages.

If you cannot find a basket-shaped pattern, you can make a shopping bag out of two squares with a round handle cut on top or sewed to each.

After you have filled the bag with some make-believe packages and hung it on dolly's arm, she will look as if she had just come home from a delightful trip to the stores.

—*Christian Science Monitor.*

A PAGE FOR THE CHILDREN

A ST. FRANCIS CHRISTMAS

About ten days after Christmas, Bobby Ransome gathered his small pals about him and started on a systematic round of the neighborhood. At each house, the children rang the doorbell and asked the same question.

"May we please have your Christmas tree, 'stead of your putting it in the ash can, and may we please have your Christmas wreath, too?"

And, just as at each house the children asked the same question, so, too, at each house the grown-up who opened the door to them gave the same answer:

"Of course you may. Wait, and I'll give them to you now. Too bad, but Christmas is over for this year, and it's time that Christmas decorations came down."

So, by the time the entire neighborhood round had been made, Bobby and his pals had twenty-five Christmas trees and twenty-five wreaths. As they got them, from house to house, the children carried them to the vacant lot next Bobby's house and there they stacked them till Saturday, when they could have a whole day for the carrying out of their plans.

Bright and early on Saturday morning, in spite of a hard snowstorm, the children gathered on the vacant lot.

"Yes, I've got a whole ball of string," said Nancy.

"And I've got three little chunks of suet," said Tom.

"And I've got a bag of nuts," said Peter.

"And I've got some suet, too," said Dan.

And so it went. Each child had something that certainly was important to that plan.

"You didn't tell what anything's for, did you?" demanded Bobby. "You just said we'd ask everybody to come and see when everything's done?"

No—they hadn't told; and yes—they had issued their invitations; and, that matter being settled, they all fell to work.

Wreaths were soon swinging from the limbs of the oak trees, suspended by stout strings. Evergreen trees soon dotted the lot, where no evergreens had stood before.

"Guess when they fly round here tomorrow morning, they'll be s'prised!" said Nancy, tying chunks of suet to the swinging wreaths.

"Guess when they scamper round here tomorrow morning, they'll be s'prised to find a decent breakfast!" said Peter, hanging little nut-filled paper baskets on the Christmas trees.

"And if we can't get nuts every day and suet every day, I guess they like other things, too, don't they?" asked Tom anxiously.

After luncheon, when the children raced back to the vacant lot, all the grown-up neighbors followed them. Everybody wanted to know the end of the Christmas-tree-and-wreath story.

"There you are!" shouted the children, when their audience was complete. "How's that for a s'prise for them? And we're going to keep this lunch room going till spring."

"Lunch room?" asked Bobby's mother.

"It's the Evergreen Lunch Room," went on Nancy. "Don't you see? I mean, don't you see the food? Prob'ly the blue jays and the juncos and the chickadees and the squirrels won't find it till they go on a breakfast hunt tomorrow morning."

"Well," said Peter's mother, "I think this belated Christmas party is as nice as Christmas itself. The birds can snuggle into a sheltering wreath and eat breakfast, and the squirrels will think trees that grow nuts in winter for hungry squirrels are Christmas trees worth knowing about! Who thought up this lunch room?"

"Oh, everybody," said Bobby, in the vague way of childhood. "We liked the trees and wreaths and hated to throw 'em away, and we thought, why not let the birds and squirrels have some Christmas fun, even if it was late? May we keep on having nuts and suet and things?" he finished, feeling in his bones that perhaps this was a good time to ask.

"Why not let them, indeed?" said Nancy's mother.

And, to the joy of all the children and to the joy of all the birds and squirrels, who soon learned to come every morning for breakfast, all the mothers said in a chorus:

"You may!"

They were talking about "nuts and suet and things." But perhaps they were thinking about St. Francis of Assisi!

—Mary Bradford in
The Christian Register.

SUMAC

It burns in the cedar wood
 And flames in the pasture lot,
 Its smouldering embers glow
 On the shores of the brook, red hot;
 Not till the winter blows
 Do its lingering sparks expire,
 But the ashen white of the snows
 Smothers the sumac's fire.

Autumn's smoky crone,
 A gipsy woman old,
 Wrapped in a scarlet cloak
 Brodered with tarnished gold.
 When the frosty nights are cold,
 And gone is the cricket choir,
 She warms herself at the coals
 Of the sumac's dying fire.

—Minna Irving.

Open up all the avenues you can for your children but leave them to follow them up for themselves.—*Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.*

A good student is one who knows how to study effectively.—*Francis Roy Cooper.*

"Are you a good runner?" asked a farmer of a student applying for a job on his ranch.

The student said he was.

"Well," said the farmer, "you can round up the sheep."

After several hours the student returned, perspiring and out of breath.

"I got the sheep all right," he reported, "but I had a fierce time getting the lambs."

"The lambs?" said the farmer. "I haven't any lambs."

"Well," replied the student, "they are in the corral."

Thereupon the farmer went to investigate. In the corral with the exhausted sheep he found half a dozen panting jackrabbits.

A conservative newspaper prints sensation because it is news. A sensational newspaper prints news because it is sensation.—*B. A. Smalley.*

The real optimist is one who fills his rain barrel when it storms instead of talking sunshine.—*Roger W. Babson.*

So far the twentieth century's chief contribution to civilization has been noise.—*Frederic F. Van de Water.*

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